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The Everyday Phenomena of Black Hole Chemistry

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The cornerstone of thermodynamics is the first law, which for a black hole identifies thermodynamic energy with its mass, temperature with its surface gravity, and entropy with its area. Recent work that posits the identification of a cosmological constant with thermodynamic pressure results in black holes behaving somewhat like chemical systems, with pressure-volume terms appearing in the first law and the black hole mass interpreted as enthalpy instead of energy. This perspective on black holes leads to a broad range of novel and interesting phenomena that have counterparts in everyday chemical thermodynamics, including liquid—gas Van der Waals transitions, reentrant phase transitions seen in the mixing of two liquids, and the analogue of a triple point.

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